

of laughable fakes, would the claim that Saddam Hussein was making a secret effort to acquire hundreds of tons of uranium oxide from Niger have been something to stake a life-and-death decision on?

Niger is a small country in West Africa, about the size of Rio de Janeiro in population. They have been mining uranium since 1970. There are two mines that produce uranium.

□ 2045

Both mines are run by an international consortium that includes Japanese, German, Spanish and French interests. Both mines are closely monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency. There is nothing, nothing that could lead an objective observer to believe that Iraqi agents would slip into Niger, make a deal, and slip out again without somebody in the tiny expatriate community noticing and mentioning to Dr. El Baradei, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In fact, a distinguished retired American diplomat, Joe Wilson, spent more than a week in Niger sniffing around for any hint that the story might be true and found absolutely nothing.

It is simply not believable that this tiny, highly regulated industry in this tiny, sparsely populated country could have or would have violated IAE rules and broken U.N. sanctions to sell uranium oxide to Hussein. There are plenty of legitimate customers.

So why did the administration decide to believe it? Because of the overwhelming evidence? Hardly.

Last week Secretary of State Powell gave the following ringing defense to the President's claim: "There was sufficient evidence floating around at the time that such a statement was not totally outrageous."

Well, there you have it. It was obvious to anyone who looked into it carefully that Niger had neither the means nor the motive to sell uranium to Iraq. It was obvious. It was reported. And it was known. And yet the Secretary of State said, people of his stature thought it was not totally outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, actually it was totally outrageous. The President and the Congress are sworn to protect the United States of America. This is our most solemn duty. The question, and it is the only question that matters, is this: Did the threat posed by Saddam Hussein rise to the level of an imminent threat to national security or even to a grave and gathering danger? So far nothing leads to that conclusion.

There can be little argument about whether the people of Iraq are better off today than they were under Hussein. They are. But the 200 young Americans who have died and continue to die, one died last night, did not pledge their lives to make the people of Iraq better off. They pledged to protect the United States of America from real threats to our security. They died believing that they did. So far, I do not

know why they died. We should find out.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

#### SCHOOL READINESS ACT HURTS CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the so-called School Readiness Act of 2003, H.R. 2210. This bill does not provide the adequate funding for Head Start or for the much-needed expansion of early Head Start and migrant and seasonal Head Start programs.

H.R. 2210 begins an irreversible process of dismantling Head Start by promoting religious discrimination in hiring, shortchanging teachers, and denying services to eligible children by continuing to underfund Head Start.

Nearly 4 decades of research have established that Head Start delivers the intended services and improves the lives and development of the children and families that it serves. To illustrate how effective Head Start can be, let me tell you about one of my constituents.

Ms. Robles is a single mother with three children. She works full time while her children attend school. Pablo, the youngest of her three children, has been fortunate enough to participate and be enrolled in the Head Start program. Before Pablo started Head Start, he was quiet and withdrawn, a very shy boy who was very much dependent upon his mother. Pablo is now a confident and expressive little boy. He wants to do things independently and enjoys playing puzzles and building blocks.

Ms. Robles told me, "The transformation in Pablo is amazing. I see the difference in Pablo and my other two children who were not lucky enough to participate in Head Start."

In addition, Ms. Robles is grateful to Head Start because of the services it provides. She receives help from the social workers, including the emotional support she needed ever since leaving her family and friends behind in her country to make a new start in the United States. The nurses and teachers who participate in Head Start are also attentive and helpful to her and her children. Ms. Robles now feels she is a better mother to her children at home and a more prepared parent advocate to her children in school.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this bill that skimps on children, H.R. 2210. As the old saying goes, if it ain't broke, why fix it.

Let us not play with the future of our most vulnerable children like Pablo Robles.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

#### FUND MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GRIJALVA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the comments that my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ), just finished. Today I would like to deal with one specific aspect of H.R. 2210 dealing with Head Start and that specific aspect has to do with an effort that this House must undertake to provide true relief to the impoverished children of migrant and seasonal farm working families.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs successfully provide the infants and children of migrants and seasonal workers in this country with educational and health related services. These services and these support services provided by Migrant and Seasonal Head Start keep children out of the fields where they are exposed to pesticides, hazardous equipment, extreme heat and other related health dangers.

Unfortunately, a severe funding shortfall leaves more than 80 percent of these eligible children without these vital services and protection.

According to the study published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Migrant and Seasonal